

1657. *A Defence of Episcopacy.*

A

SERMON

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HEBREWS 5. 4.

*No Man taketh this honour to himself but he that is call'd of
God as was Aaron.*

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L O N D O N :

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H E B R E W S 5. 4.

No man taketh this honour to himself but he that is called of God as was Aaron.

AS Stedfastness of belief is necessary in the fundamental and catholick doctrines of the Christian Church, no less necessary is it in the essential parts of its polity and administrations. Errors in doctrine disturb the peace of the Church by doubtful disputations; but mistakes in discipline dissolve it's unity by actual disobedience; The former are commonly ended in the excommunication of the Heretick; but in the redress of the later the destruction of multitudes is involv'd. For Schism above all kinds of rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft, which, when spirited up by the subornations of *Corah* and his company, spreads thro' the people by as suddain diffusion, as the swift plague sent for it's Correction.

And as this determination of judgment is necessary in Christians that are to obey, so much more in those who in a due subordination are appointed to sway the Government of the Church: considering that as in the Camp of Israel, so in the Church of Christ these innovations have been generally raised by aspiring men, who like *Corah* not being content with the ordinary Service of the Sanctuary, have by ambitious contests sought the priesthood also, and have also perished in the gainsaying of *Corah*.

For the powers of Spiritual Jurisdiction, primarily intended for the edification of believers, not the destruction of gainsayers, have a Divine Commission: and being ordain'd of God, as they are not given by man, so neither are they gotten by usurpation. *No man taketh this honour to himself, but he that is call'd of God as was Aaron.*

By which general assertion, the Apostle both proves the authority and shews the correspondence of our Saviour's Priesthood with the Levitical: as it follows v. 5. *so Jesus Christ glorify'd not himself to be made an High-Priest, but he that said unto him, Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee.*

Now as the Tabernacle of *Moses* was a typical prefiguration of the Church of Christ, so the Levitical Priesthood in the one was answerable to the Sacerdotal Administration in the other: as the form of the Tabernacle was not left to the invention of *Moses*, nor craft of Artificers but *all things were made according to the pattern God shew'd to Moses in the Mount*; so the Christian Church was built upon the foundation of the Apostles, not upon the artificial models of Statesmen, those deficient Architects even in earthly Governments. And as in the Tabernacle the Ministry was composed of High-Priest, Priests, and Levites; so the Administration in the Church is vested in Bishops, Priests, and Deacons, in a correspondent Subordination.

Seeing

Seeing then upon the maintenance or removal of the Chief Priests or Bishops, by whom the inferiour Orders of Priests and Deacons are sent, the whole Ecclesiastical ministry is supported or dissolv'd; and seeing the Honour mention'd in the text is that of the Chief Priesthood, or Primacy in the Church: our present undertaking shall be, to prove the Divine Right of Episcopacy; or that the Order of Bishops is a Divine Institution, not an humane ordinance, and that *no man taketh this honour to himself, but he that is call'd of God as was Aaron*: a Subject not unsuitable on this Solemn Day of Ordination.

First then we shall endeavour to prove (as far as the time will allow, disproportion'd to so great an argument,) that the Order of Bishops in that fix'd imparity and superiority above the subordinate Orders of Presbyters and Deacons is a Divine Ordinance. Afterwards we shall direct our Exhortations, 1st to those who oppose this Doctrine of Episcopacy, and 2^{dly} to those who maintain the Institution.

First, We are to prove that the Order of Bishops as above qualify'd is a Divine Ordinance.

In the beginnings of the Church, Christ the Master-Builder seem'd to lay this plan of Government, when he distinguish'd his twelve Apostles from the seventy Disciples: which he did not by dignity in pomp or outward state; but by Eminence in Gifts, in extent of Commission, in miraculous Operations: The Apostles resembling the twelve Princes of the Tribes of their Fathers, *Numb. 1. 16*, Heads of Thousands in *Israel*; the Disciples representing the Seventy Elders bearing the burthen of the People: *Numb. 11. 16, 17*. that thus in establishing the perpetual Government of the House of *Israel*, the same form of Polity might be continued, the same Subordination of Rulers, corresponding no less in Superiority of Power than in exactness of Number.

The Supereminency of the Twelve above the Disciples was so determined, that when *Judas* by transgression fell from his Dignity, the Holy Ghost gave direction to supply the vacancy, by an Election out of the Seventy; fulfilling that propheticall imprecation, *let another take his Bishoprick*. *Psal. 109. 8.* & *Act. 1. 20*. Not but this eminence of the Apostles above the Disciples was manifested in the delegation of it, wherein Christ by a solemn Act placed them upon an equality with himself. For when He that primary Apostle was sent by the Father; as the *Spirit of the Lord was upon him to anoint him to preach the Gospel*. *II. 61. 1.* so when the Twelve Apostles were sent by him, he thus consecrated them, *as the Father sent me, even so send I you; and when he had said this, he breath'd on them, and said, receive ye the Holy Ghost*. *Joh. 20. 21*. As the Father sent me to chuse you out of the world, and to ordain you to the Ministry of Salvation: so send I you to separate others, by a successive Ordination.

Not that we insist on these preliminary Acts of Christ, in the choice of the Number and Ordination of the Apostles, lest we should derogate from their more solemn Inauguration to that high Dignity, when they

were Anointed with the Holy Ghost and with Fire: and whilst in building of the Church we adore the subordinate concurrence in the Persons of the Godhead, we must avoid confusion in the Acts of their Offices. The Collecting and Sanctifying of the Church is the eminent and appropriate Act of the Holy Ghost, the eternal Spirit of Truth, the other Comforter, who upon our Saviour's Ascension to his Throne, in the mysterious method of the Divine Mission came down, not for a transitory space, but to gather and to preside over his Evangelical Church, to order and to establish it for ever. Did Christ then lay the Foundation? the Holy Ghost built thereupon Did Christ call the Twelve to be Ministers of Salvation? the Holy Ghost was to anoint them to preach the Gospel. Did Christ send the Twelve to be his Embassadors to the World? the Holy Ghost was to sign their infallible Credentials. Not that in the publick consignation of these powers to the Apostles the Holy Ghost did act or speak wholly of himself: but as he should bring to their remembrance all Christ's former instructions; so he should *hereafter take of Christ's and shew it unto them*. Joh. 16. 13, 14. And as our Saviour was originally concurring in the grant, so was he perpetually coassisting in the Execution. For when he issued out the Commission to the Apostles to go and disciple all Nations, he entail'd this promise, *behold I am with you alway even unto the end of the World*. Mar. 28. 20.

Surely the Conformity of these successive Acts of our Saviour in founding Episcopacy do far exceed the languid testimonies of his bare approbation and countenance, or the oblique and accidental insinuations of Scripture wrested in its favour.

But if these Arguments cannot induce some abstracting Spirits to grant it a divine institution, ordain'd by Christ himself, yet, what amounts to the same, they must be constrain'd to yield it an Apostolical ordinance instituted by the commission'd Apostles. If then it shall appear that these great Legates of the Son of God did constitute and ordain this uniform Order of Episcopal Government in all Churches of the Saints; 'twill be no less impious to reject their Constitutions, than to deny their Doctrines, who acted as well as spake, *as they were moved by the Holy Ghost*.

St. Paul, the great Apostle of the Gentiles, tho' in his own opinion counted a posthumous and supernumerary Apostle, yet equal to the rest in the warrant of his Vocation, and superiour to them in the execution, this glorious Apostle, who as he labour'd, so wrote more abundantly than they all, in the Churches which he planted and in the Writings which he left, did set up this actual and settled Government, and gave Laws for its perpetual Administration.

To Timothy was committed the oversight of the Church of Ephesus, the Metropolitane over the Asian Churches: to Titus the populous Island of Crete. In his Epistles to these primary Prelates, what distinguishing marks do we find of the special Powers of Ordination and Jurisdiction vested in their high and holy Function? which yet the Apostle seems to mention, only to remind them of their Charge, not to establish the grant of it; to press them to the exercise, not to confirm the Title of their jurisdiction.

1st. If we consider the power of Ordination vested in *Timothy*, by that express Command of the Apostle to *lay hands suddenly on no Man*, 1 Tim. 5. 22. we find not the delegation of this power, but an advice for the cautious administration of it in the Church.

There were multitudes of Presbyters resident in the populous Church of *Ephesus*. If then any one, or if altogether had an equal power to ordain without him, the restriction of this Charge to *Timothy* had been superfluous: if with him, why were they not joyn'd in the Commission?

But how could Presbyters be instructed in the communication of Episcopal power, which was superiour to their own? for *without contradiction as the less is blessed, so is he consecrated of the greater*. And as St. Paul commands *Timothy* alone by a general injunction to lay hands suddenly on no man; so in the character of a 1 Tim. 3. 10 Bishop he gives a more particular and ample description, lest *Timothy* might err by an hasty Consecration.

Again, in the Ordination of Deacons tho' of inferiour consequence, *Timothy* alone is charged to prove their Conversation and Abilities by an antecedent examination; and if found qualify'd according to the Canonical Directions of the Apostle, to admit them to use the Office of a Deacon. 1 Tim. 3. 10.

2^{dly} The jurisdictional power vested in *Timothy* appears thro' the whole tenour of the Epistles, over Presbyters, over Deacons, over false teachers, extending to all parts of Government, over all the Members of the Church.

1st. As to Presbyters, *Timothy* must charge them that in preaching they presume to *teach no other Doctrine* 1 Tim. 1. 3, 4. than what was prescribed, not intermeddling, no nor even attending to useles Fables and perplex'd Genealogies.

Again, if any Presbyter were eminent in the discharge of his Function, *Timothy* must distinguish him in respect and maintenance; *if an Elder rule well, labouring in word and doctrine, let him be counted worthy of double honour*. 1 Tim. 5. 17. But if an c. v. 13. Elder be impeach'd of any criminal delinquency, *Timothy* must receive his Accusation, not upon single or partial Evidence, but before two or three legal Witnesses. And if convicted of Misdemeanour, *Timothy* must by publick censure *rebuke him before all, that others also may fear*. c. v. 21. And that in rewarding of faithful Paesbyters and in correcting of delinquents *Timothy* is charg'd before God and the Elect Angels. c. v. 21. to observe these things, without preferring one Presbyter before another, doing nothing by partiality.

If *Timothy's* Jurisdiction over the venerable consistory of Presbyters be thus conspicuous, how much more over the inferiour and probationary Order of Deacons? and, if his sway be thus eminent over his consecrated Brethren, how much rather over the mix'd and undistinguish'd Laity? yea what might be rationally deduced, is actually confirm'd in his charge to superintend the Tim. 5. 3. 9. choice and maintenance of Deaconesses and Widows, to controll the exorbitance, and to prevent the encroach-

ment of false Teachers, to *Tim.* 4. 2. reprove, to rebuke, to exhort as with all long-suffering so with all Authority, not suffering any disobedience to be offer'd to the Dignity of his Government, nor Contempt to the Sanctity of his Person.

Thus in this short enumeration, we find *Timothy* plac'd over the great Metropolitan Church of *Ephesus* as in God's stead, with a like preheminance of Power as King *Saul* exalted over his Brethren: and those venerable respects and Subjection, which might be abated by his *c. Tim.* 4. 12. natural youth, are sustain'd by his deriv'd Authority.

And as the great Apostle of the *Gentiles* committed the Oversight of the *Asian* Churches to *Timothy*, so he placed *Titus* in the Bishoprick of *Crete*, in the same height of Superiority, in the same latitude of jurisdiction. This was no liminary Charge, confin'd to a parochial district or narrow division, but the oversight of the Churches over all *Crete*, a populous Island renown'd of old for the multitude of it's Cities; yet in every one of these Cities *Titus* was appointed to ordain Elders, in every City to correct Disorders. This was the Foundation of his Residence in that Island: for for this cause (saith *St. Paul*) left *Tit.* 1. 5. *I thee in Crete, that thou shouldst ordain Elders in every City, and set in order the things that are wanting or amiss.* τὰ λείποντα.

Thus the very entrance of this Epistle declares in express terms *Titus's* investiture to the special power of Ordination: and the sequel attests his Jurisdiction, whilst it gives directions for its execution. If to stop the *c. 1. 11.* Mouths of false and mercenary Teachers, if to make judiciary 3. 10. process against an Heretick by formal admonition, and by final ejection; if these be acts of jurisdiction, *Titus's* claim to it can no more be disputed now by schismatics, than contested then by Hereticks. Yea they themselves are compell'd to allow the eminence of the stations of those primary Bishops, but deny the perpetuity. They implead their Government not to have been fix'd and durable, but local and temporary; their Superiority in the Church to have been of the same formal and arbitrary Nature as of a presidency in Assemblies; and their transcendent powers to have been of no farther extent or continuance than of a Consul in a State, or Prolocutor in a Synod; elected to moderate for a time the publick Affairs of the Church; but his Commission expiring, descending again into the coequal rank of Presbyters without any personal Discrimination.

But in answer to this visionary plan of discipline may we not resume the challenge of that Father, *Edant Origines*, let them produce their authentick Records of such a shifting precedency, the least mention in all Antiquity of any such plebeian and ambulatory Government? Where are the Registers of these spiritual Officers? Where the Lists, and aras of their Succession? by the Providential Superintendence of the Holy Spirit of God there remain to this day * Registers preserv'd in the Church, like

* *Bilson* cap, 13. *de perpetua gubernatione Ecclesie.*

the Roll in the Ark, not maim'd by length or vicissitudes of time, which contain a punctual enumeration of Bishops, who from the Apostles down to the Nicæan Council presided in the Churches of *Antioch*, of *Jerusalem*, of *Alexandria*, of *Rome*, living and dying upon their Charges, no momentary guides of the Church, nor subject to removal like Officers in State or Commanders in Armies.

And as this Argument has no foundation in History, so neither has that other in reason, whence they would infer the equality of Offices from the scriptural community of Names. For a Bishop comprehending in his Office the whole Hierarchy, may by the same condescension and propriety be styl'd a Presbyter or Deacon, as the Apostle himself was an Evangelist and Minister. Granting then the promiscuous use of the words Bishop and Presbyter in Holy Writ, which yet is the late interpretation of the fourth Century, if hence the primitive Governours of the Church sometimes assum'd the Names of Presbyters to express their humility; yet they were oftentimes graced with the Title of * Apostles, to declare their Superiority.

Thus Scripture brings in her infallible Witness, that *St. Paul* by his own hands did inſeoffe these two Bishops *Timothy* and *Titus* in their respective dioceses, and did seat them in their Episcopal thrones: and should we run up thro' Ecclesiastical History to the Originals of the first renown'd Churches, they all bring in their faithful accounts, glorying in their Apostolical Founders. *Mark* the inspir'd Evangelist was made Bishop of *Alexandria* by the Apostles, *Linus* of *Rome* by *St. Peter*, *Polycarp* of *Smyrna* by *St. John*. This last mention'd Prelate whose Fame stands first in Ecclesiastick Record, and *Onesimus* whose praise is in the Gospel, are acknowledg'd to be two of those seven Bishops of the seven Churches, mention'd in the Revelations of *St. John*. These the Holy Ghost vouchsafes to grace with the high compellation of Angels, Angels, not on account of their Divine Ministry, but fix'd superiority: whom he commends for their personal graces; whom he menaces and censures, not for the usurpation of their Power, but remissness in its administration.

Many of this first class of Bishops planted in several Regions by the Apostles, by course of Nature or an early Martyrdom, resign'd there vacant Thrones again into the same hands and disposition. But *St. John* a Patriarch in longevity as well as Authority, who govern'd the Church sixty years after Christ's Crucifixion, probably surviv'd an entire Succession.

If then not only the first filling of the new created Sees of the Hierarchy, but several Supplies of their vacancies pass'd under the hands, under the direction of the Apostles themselves, with what previcacious ignorance do some affirm it to have been an innovation of their immediate Successors? Had those Persons by a concerted Tyranny made this bold and hasty step, had they upon the demise of the Apostles (like the wan-

* *Phil.* 2. 25. *Theodoret.* in 1 *Tim.* cap. 3.

son Israelites upon the departure of *Moses*) worshipped an Idol of their own invention; if the Lord himself had not in those days of Miracles visited with a Curse and with a Plague; yet that zealous Apostle *St. John*, incens'd with the indignation of *Moses*, would doubtless have caused it to be broken down, and have ground it to Powder. He who censured *Diotrephes* (that great Ecclesiastick) for contesting his transcendent Patriarchal Power, he who menaced the *Asian* Churches for the least deviation from the Truth, would he have suffered a total detection? would he have permitted the Tabernacle of the Christian Church to be dissolv'd? No: nor a stake thereof to be loos'd, nor a cord thereof to be broken.

Let then our Adversaries say of all the Churches, as *St. Jerom* said of the *Corinthian*, that this sacred institution in general sprung from disorder, that a contentious emulation arising from a parity obliged the Apostles to found a Subordination of Governours: yet whilst they debase the Dignity, they grant the Apostolical date of its Original. Not but 'tis doubtless of a more Noble, a more Ancient Extraction. Before the foundations of the Church in *Corinth*, or of *Corinth* it self that Ancient City, before the Foundations of the Earth were laid, was this Ordinance also establish'd by the predestinated Will of the Spirit of God; whose eternal Purposes in his Church, tho' commencing in time, are not derived from the disorders nor determin'd by the occurrences of it; neither is the unchangeable Spirit of Wisdom taught new Counsels by the sinful Passions of Men.

If upon the wide extent of the Church spreading like the Camp of *Israel*, the Holy Ghost gave direction to the Apostles more sure and necessary than that of *Jethro* to *Moses*, to chuse Bishops out of every Nation, like Heads out of every Tribe, which in their residentiary Governments should divide the Burthen of the People; tho' either the Absence of the Apostles, or distance of Territory, either the overflowing Numbers or unruliness of mix'd Profelytes, tho' these might be the adventitious and collateral occasions of constituting particular Bishopricks, yet they were not the primary and predetermin'd grounds of the original Order. These promiscuous irregularities might hasten their Erection, or when erected, might produce regulations in them; but he alone, who is a God of Order, Founded this Uniform and Harmonious Frame of Government,

For in Nations as distant in Customs, as situation, yea in the nearest distances of time as well as widest intervals of Place, we find it rear'd up in a similar and compleat establishment, an Establishment so widely, so speedily, so regularly accomplish'd doubtless by the eternal Spirit, working mightily in the Apostles his Sacred instruments; forasmuch as only his unresisted Power could give it such dispatch, and his unerring Wisdom such Uniformity.

The founding of any Civil Government is the work of ages: the wisdom its laws is perfected by experience of their defects, and the stability of them by manifold changes: and when 'tis thus gradually wrought into an approved and consummate model, it's introduction into a nation is arrested by the opposition of War, and an inbred contention of the people for their ancient municipal ways. But the diffusion of this one Government in all Nations was not subject to the lingring determination of battles or of treaties, partaking of the blessing given to the first Propagators; *whose line on a sabbath went out into all the earth, and their words unto the end of the world.* Psal. 19. 22.

And it's Divinity which is thus evidenced by it's miraculous promulgation, is no less confirm'd by it's wondrous duration. As God's settled Ordinances in nature, so his positive decrees in Religion are strengthen'd by length of days, which decays the artificial works of men and blots out their celebrated opions. *If this thing be of Men it will come to nought,* said that great master of Israel, of Christianity it self. Since then this leading Ordinance has been try'd by multitude of years, and by successive assaults of persecutions, as it's exemption from natural decay declares it not to be of Men, so it's surmounting their sinful oppositions manifests it's protection as well as original to be of God.

If then ye believe not the record which Scripture gives to the Divinity of this Order, we ought *to believe it for the very work's sake*; for that testifies of it, by it's supernatural promulgation in all Nations, and continuation in all succeeding ages.

Thus Holy Writ by the apparent precedents of Episcopacy in the persons of *Timothy* and *Titus* and of the seven Angels of the *Asian Churches*, confirm'd by it's establishment and perpetuity, are those Divine Testimonies, whereby God bears witness to his holy Ordinance.

Let us from this strong foundation of our Faith the witness of God, descend to the testimony of men abounding in the writings of the Primitive Fathers, in the ancient Canons and synodical Constitutions, and universal practice of the Church of Christ, which all come in with unanimous and coherent evidence ratifying the testimony of Scripture, as the voice of the spouse seconding the voice of her glorious Husband.

But if our adversaries perpetually cast in all appeals to the ancients, still retreat to that sceptical expostulation, is it written? requiring hereof a more particular and express comprehension in holy Writ; we shall only premise, that this demand declares their partial and inconsistent prejudice against this Ordinance, since they submit to \neq others as of necessary obligation upon inferiour, at least but equal, \neq *The Lord's day. Infant-* evidences of Scripture. *Baptism. &c.*

And as this demand is inconsistent with their practice, so is it irrational in its nature.

The Apostolical Doctrines, which are the objects of the Christian Faith, are set down in Scripture, being unalrerable in all times and universal in all Nations. But matters of fact are transmitted down in a genuine and authentick

authentick method no less in vulgar History than in sacred record ; since even in this, their truth is ascertain'd, not by the evidence of faith, but apprehensions of sense. And as we believe the narration of Christ's miraculous acts not so much from the Inspiration of the Evangelists, as in that they were contemporaries and present eye-witnesses of the Facts ; so we may say of the succeeding Historians of the Church, as the Apostles themselves said of the first, *these are they which knew these things, and wrote these things*, and upon account of these advantages of evidence, *we know that their testimony is true.*

Let us then, as the Lord himself advises his distracted people, let us *stand in the ways, and see and ask for the old paths, where is the good way*, Jer. 6. 16. let us ask of those antient Fathers who cast it up with their own hands, and traced it out with their own footsteps for the direction of future generations.

Out of this ample list give me leave to make a brief citation only of two holy Martyrs, the one for the peculiar and level direction, the other for the plenitude of his Testimony.

The first in order is *Clement* the beloved co-partner of the two great Apostles *St. Paul* and *St. Peter* ; one mentioned in the Epistles of the former with great esteem, one who laid the other in his grave, and who succeeded him in his See and in his Martyrdom. This holy Martyr and Bishop of *Rome* writes an admonitory Epistle to the *Corinthians* miserably involved in an outrageous Schism among and against their Bishops and Presbyters, even to the expulsion of the persons, and confounding the orders ; he to pacify these distractions, traces to them the divine Original of their distinction in Offices and in names. ' Our Apostles knowing ' by our Lord Jesus Christ the Contention that would arise (*Ἐπὶ τῷ ὀνόματι καὶ ἱερωσύνῃ*) about the name of Episcopacy, and ' they for this very cause having receiv'd perfect knowledge, appointed ' the fore said degrees, and gave thereupon a design'd order or list of ' offices. As the Apostles receiv'd this command of ordaining these different Orders from the Lord by inspiration, so this their Companion receiv'd it from them by immediate tradition. As the evidence of these passages confirm'd by many others, is strangely apposite, so the authority of the Epistle is most authentick ; not of a suspected and spurious fame like his forg'd recognitions or Apostolical Constitutions ; but of old read publicly in Churches as well as celebrated by the Antients.

The other witness is the renown'd *Ignatius*, equal to the former in station and martyrdom, but superiour to him in his testimony ; one who saw the Apostle *St. John*, if not Christ himself in the flesh, and who in imitation of his Revelations wrote Epistles to seven Churches : in these he has so distinguished these three orders in office and in titles, so determin'd their subordinate powers, so exalted their ministerial dignity ; that this evidence overbears all reply, debarrs all evasion.

Whether, this controversy not arising, these decisive Epistles lay many ages in silence, or whether, after it's rise, they were providentially conceal'd

ceal'd for the tryal of his Church ; their miraculous publication in the late age out of the destruction of Barbarism, was like the appearance of the roll found by *Baruch* among the ruins of the Temple : and the efforts of the adversary to suppress the authority of them, which so witnessed their condemnation, succeeded no better than the irrational transports of *Jehoiakim*, who burnt the roll that threatned his destruction : since it has produced a defence of their genuine authority by a Learned † Prelate fraught with such riches of supernumerary learning, as this unparallel'd piece stands now † *Pearson's vind. Ignar.* the glory of this National Church, the just envy of Foreign, and the eternal vindication of the Catholick, the Mother of them all.

The Testimony of this single Father and glorious Martyr is so compleat, so redoubled in every Epistle, that a citation of some particulars would be a separation of their strength : it is so compleat, that if the time would allow us to summon in *Irenæus*, *Tertullian*, *Cyprian*, *Ambrose*, or even *St. Jerome* with all the Ecclesiastick Writers in a long chain of succession ; we might appeal to the satiated adversary ; what need have we of any further witness ?

Those therefore who are not abandon'd to the penal infatuation of an affected Schism, or a fashionable infidelity, I shall refer to the Epistles themselves with that exhortation of *St. John* : *He that hath an ear to hear, let him hear, what this Holy Martyr saith unto the Churches.*

Now if the single writings of those blessed Saints carry an uncontested authority, the constitutions of them when conven'd in general Councils demand an universal submission.

It has been an antient test in the Catholick Church, that any Ordinance or usage, whose institution could not be traced in a general Council must be deriv'd from Apostolical appointment ; because no decree or authentick act less than of a general Council, could extend to all Christian Churches, but the Acts of the Apostles those universal Patriarchs, to whom the whole earth was but a Diocese, and whose words went with authority unto the ends of the World. Now in no Council either general or of an inferiour denomination, can we find the first establishment of Episcopacy recorded, but the defence and confirmation of it can we find in all.

The ancient Canons, which wear the stamp if not of Apostolical authority yet of great * Antiquity, have cast a strong enclosure about the Episcopal powers, without the least mention of their institution. In these venerable Constitutions are seen the landmarks, which however disturb'd and trodden down by after-gages, the primitive Fathers have set.

But in the Constitutions of succeeding Councils the power of Ordination is so guarded from the invasion of Presbyters, that the administration of it was not indulg'd to Rural Bishops. When *Colluthus* a Presbyter of *Alexandria* presum'd to ordain, how was this usurpation censured

in

in a general Council, the act of Ordination rescinded, and those titular Presbyters, disrobed of their pretended orders, turn'd down with derision into the Laick form !

But the Jurisdiction of Bishops has in all Councils been so universally maintain'd, that in some the denial of their power has been condemn'd as heresy, and the dethroning their persons has been declared Sacrilege. Their authority in the Church has been confirm'd by the decrees of the greatest Emperours, recommended by their submissive language, demonstrated by their actual subjection. Neither can it be contested without sacrilege by the greatest of Nobles, when they behold the

† Theodos. greatest of ‡ Emperours debarr'd by a penance more severe than the Leprosy inflicted on King *Ussiah*, when

like him he attempted by violence to approach the Altar.

And those who disguise the novelty of their Schism under an antient Heresy, who take *Arrius* that branded heretick for their Founder and Patriarch; whilst they magnify his publick opposition to his Bishop, do but remind us of his publick condemnation: whose ambitious and sacrilegious contests against his Diocesan, and whose opinions and punishment, are reserv'd in Ecclesiastical records, like the censers of *Corah* and his company, *those sinners against their own souls, to be a memorial to the children of Israel; that none that is not legally of the seed of Aaron come near to offer incense before the Lord.*

By this recollection of testimonies (too prolix for this place, but too narrow for this subject) it appears; that every Christian Bishop from the beginning of Christianity to this day, hath been call'd of God as was *Aaron*: it appears, that the Ordinance of the sacred Hierarchy was founded by our Saviour, planted in all regions by his Apostles, confirm'd by holy Scripture, by Apostolical Acts, by the immediate practice of the primitive Church, and by the universal practice of the succeeding Church, ratify'd by the judgement of all sacred Synods, all holy Fathers.

By these unshaken authorities is every Bishop exalted above his brethren: and when he is array'd in his holy ornaments, to all unprejudiced eyes his appearance among his interiour Clergy resembles the supereminence of *Simon* the High-Priest; *who when he put on the robe of honour, and was cloathed with the perfection of glory, when he went up to the holy Altar, made the garment of holiness honourable: who stood as a cedar in Libanus, compassed about by all the Sons of Aaron in their glory, before all the Congregation of Israel.* Ecclus. 50. 11, 12.

Having thus establish'd the Doctrine, we proceed to make our destin'd application by directing our exhortations

- 1st. To those that oppose and renounce Episcopacy.
- 2^{dly}, To those who maintain the Institution. And
- First, as to those who Oppose it.

Now as we upbraid the unequal choice of Atheists, that if there be no life to come, our error passes away with the dissolution of our being; but if there be a future state, their mistake ends in eternal condemnation:

so with similitude of argument, tho' not extent of consequences, we may forewarn our adversaries, if Episcopacy be not essentially a different form from Presbytery, if the powers vested in Bishops may be equally diffused to Presbyters, yet we stand upon equal terms of security; inasmuch as our limitation of the powers to persons does not cancel the institution of them, nor prejudice the administration; and however we differ in opinion, yet in fact we differ only as a limited from an universal Presbytery. But on the other hand, if the Episcopal order be constituted of God, if he has commanded it for a perpetual Ordinance; *who unto him that striveth with his Maker*, Isa. 45. 9. to cancel the decrees of his eternal purpose in his Church. *Let the potsherd strive with the potsherd of the earth*; let frail men set up their own frailer constitutions in a mutual opposition; let them mould, change, abrogate each other's laws by the prevalency of their passions or superiority of wisdom.

If this thing be of God, 'tis not only impious to strive against it, but 'twill be found vain by sad experience *to fight against God*. Let them consider the success of the sundry kinds of their polity founded in the room of Episcopacy: let them survey their Consistorys under all their diversity of forms, the incompatible mixture and tyranny of Lay-Presbyters, their mimic Councils of *Classes* and *Synods*, their capricious and abortive projects of a Comprehension: these have been all found full of inconvenience, deformity and weakness; so that in their new erections they have but *hewn out to themselves cisterns, broken cisterns that cannot hold water*.

Besides, in shaking off the Jurisdiction of the Church and the easy yoke of her holy Discipline, whilst they dream'd of liberty, they are subject to an heavier bondage. Their Consistorys arbitrary, irregular, without appeal, as confin'd in every *Independent Church*, are a parochial papacy; as lodg'd in *Synods* or *Classes*, are so many Courts of *Inquisition*.

Wherefore by vertue of a Toleration tho' the sword of Ecclesiastical Government may seem to be born in vain, yet from it's long experienced efficacy to edification and manners, we may say of it in comparison of all others, as *David* said of *Goliath's sword*, that *there is none like unto it*.

But to these temporal inconveniences we adjure you to add the eternal denunciations against your schism, against your causeless separation from your Bishop. Consider ye leaders of a toothless people the trivial wages of your crying iniquity, compos'd only of some narrow subscriptions, or purloin'd gratuities, proportion'd to your artificial servitude in flattering men in their errow, in prophecying unto them smooth things. Will ye for this wretched equivalent, will ye, (as the Lord expostulates) *pollute me thus among my people merely for handfuls of barley and pieces of bread, to slay the souls that should not dye, and to save the souls alive that should not live, by your lying to my people that hear your lyes?* Ezek. 13. 19.

However if neither the present distractions of separation, nor it's eternal hazard, if neither the excellency of our uniform government, nor the

the deformity of their divided and inconsistent polity can make a just impression ; if they persist to disown that Ordinance, which the Church throughout all the world hath acknowledg'd ; yet let them cease to treat it with contumely, what the universal Church hath with reverence defended. When the Episcopal Order, the Ordinance of the Blessed Spirit, shall be attributed to the operations of *that man of sin* ; when those excellent Bishops and Martyrs, whose fame and whose glorious acts shine in the memorials of the Church, shall be reproach'd as Antichristian, as the great deceivers of the world, the authors of all Heresy, all Schisms, the publick incendiaries of Christiendom ; when these obloquies shall not only be current in their conversation, but amplify'd in their Writings ; the unprejudiced heathen cannot but rebuke such blasphemous treatment, *Re-wilest thou God's High-Priests ?* They never treated their national Gods or their Priests with indignity, tho' *they were no gods* ; and we the worshippers of the living God in our controversies for our holy Church, *when with the Archangel we are thus contending about the body of Moses, durst not bring against the adversary a rattling accusation.* For what were this but to degrade the dignity of our profession, as well as to disobey it's laws ? what were it but to furnish with invenom'd arrows the quiver of all the lewd hirelings in infidelity and mercenary veterans in Atheism, which blaspheme for pay and curse for contributions. For out of the miscellaneous materials collected of old by Schismaticks what an indictment has been form'd of late, digested into articles of rebuke, of reproach, and of blasphemy, against the Hierarchical Order : a Book, which not like ancient Heresy, by remonstrance but accusation, not by oblique insinuations but bold assertions, propounded in *these*. enters it's protest against Episcopacy. What ? as a political mercenary engine to support Monarchys, or to subvert Republicks ? No : it declares it in it's original, a spurious usurpation and a forgery ; and in it's nature and consequences, not only incommodious but inconsistent, not only useless but destructive to all humane Society, under whatever plan or form of administration. A Book, which in a strain above it's ordinary prophaneness burlesques the Ordination of Bishops, (whereby so many have this day been set apart and unalterably sealed to the work of the Ministry) only as a pious piece of pageantry, or an holy farce ; and the Imposition of hands, as a device of no other effect, and no better intent, than a solemn legerdemain, and traditional juggle of priestcraft. And all this written and publish'd in open defiance to the civil Power, to the Ecclesiastical, to the united indignation of a National Synod.

But alas ! what power is sufficient to bind or to eject this *legion*, since their name is many ? yea rather, what power will attempt it, which by the fond reception of this book from the mighty Noble down to the illiterate Mechanick, finds the same penal infatuation spread upon the people that rested upon the *Gergasites*, who rejected our Saviour for his removal of a less publick grievance ; or if these confederates (who they are or what they are, God knows,) could be ejected by a publick prosecution ; yet

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yet to what purpose, when they can retreat and go out safely into the covert of Deists, of Socinians, Atheists and Libertines, as into the herd of swine? since these things be so, let us then turn our eyes upon our selves; let us exhort all those,

Secondly, who Maintain Episcopacy.

If then this Government be establish'd for ever in the Catholick Church of Christ, the defence and preservation of it ought to be dearer to Christians, than all secular interests, all civil obligations, all inferior reasons of state. There is in men a native affection for their own Country, which tho' full of deformity, tho' despoil'd with the havock of war, is more delightful to them than the most beautiful and enrich'd Territory on earth. And tho' we may justify this inherent fondness for our native Land on account of it's being the inheritance of our Forefathers, and the present habitation of Relations, tho' for our brethren and companions sake, we may wish it prosperity; (Psal. 122. yet the overruling love of God's Church erected in it, not only justifies our wishes, but demands our endeavours for it's felicity; 'yea because of the house of the Lord our God, I will seek to do thee good, Neither is this preference of affection to the Church any injustice to the State, however postpon'd to it in the inverted notions of Statesmen, and factious madness of the people. For who shall reproach it in us as a bigotted fondness, or Ecclesiastick Zeal; since the Lord himself loveth the Gates of Sion more than all the dwellings of Jacob? (Psal. 87. 1.)

Among the factious and amuzing discriminations of parties, the politically blended definitions of persons, Episcopacy seems to give us an unerring and decisive test of those, that really belong to our Sion, and as her true Sons, are link'd to her Communion, or cut off from her Rewards. 'He that in this Doctrine is not with us, the same is against us: according to St. Ignacius; * 'Whoever belongs to God and to Jesus Christ, is with the Bishop: but if any man follows one who causes divisions from him, shall not inherit the Kingdom of God.

For surely not a veneration for the Antiquity of this Ordinance, which only sways the affections, but a belief of it's necessity, which binds the conscience, can hold men fast to the Communion or interest of our Church. Tho' we acknowledge it's ancient date and renown, tho' we reverence it as the old Government of our Fathers; yet if we believe it's institution to have been derived only from their wisdom or pleasure, no man is bound to oppose the alteration of it's form by the destruction of his family, nor to sacrifice his children that are living, in veneration to his Fathers which are dead. But if I am fully perswaded that this Ordinance came from God, I am bound not only to resolve in my heart, but to confess with the mouth, if I should dye with it, I will not deny it in any wife.

'Twas a general & defection from this old way, to the dubious plan of Calvinism, that in the late Rebellion brought on the sad Catastrophe of this Episcopal Church: and surely the extinction of any national Church, however brought to pass, whether devoured by the lawless rage of sanguinary persecutions, or more authorised massacres of intestine wars, whether born down by the sway of publick revolutions, or eaten out by the slow venom of political acts, may justly be resolv'd into the case of the desultory Jews; because 'they forsake the covenant of the Lord their God. (Deut. 29. 25.)

The covenant God made with that people, was the covenant of the law, under the establishment of the Levitical Priesthood: the succeeding covenant which he made with Christians, was the covenant of the Gospel, under the Government of the Episcopal Ministry. Now if upon the alteration of that temporary establishment of Moses, the Apostle infer, 'the Priest-hood being chang'd, there is made of necessity a change

* *Ep. ad Philadelph. cap. 3.*

Ὅσοι γὰρ Θεῷ
εἰσὶν ἐν Ἰησοῦ
Χρῆστῃ, ὅσοι
μετὰ τῷ Ὁπί-
σκει πρὸς εἰρήν.
ἔστις χρίζοντες
ἀναλὼθῃ,
βασιλείαν
Θεοῦ & κλη-
ρονομεῖ.

† Clarendon's hist. vol. 1. lib. 1.

* a change also of the law ; (Heb. 7. 12.) may we not more forcibly conclude of the durable institution of Christ, that the Priesthood being dissolv'd, there is made of necessity a dissolution of the Church? And St. Ignatius in his Epistle ad Trallianos,

having reckon'd up the three Orders, Bishops, Presbyters and Deacons, plainly affirms, * without these there is no Church.

* *χωρεῖται τῶν ἐκκλησιῶν ὁ καλεῖται.* In the great Reformation from the Church of Rome when the Lord commanded all Nations to come out of her, by what a distinguishing blessing did he declare himself to be our God ; that in the removal of her inveterate superstitions Episcopacy was retain'd, and that those cumbersome superstructions were taken down without shaking the foundation.

In the revolution of earthly Dominions, things are by an impetuous sway born to a contrary extrem; and the reformation of some errours is carry'd, beyond the line of wrath, to the establishment of greater. How was it then, when the Lord suffer'd the Candlestick to be remov'd or overturn'd in other Kingdoms, that he set his love upon us and chose us, as the resting place of his holy Tabernacle, where it might shine and give light to the people? not because we were more in number than other Kingdoms; for we are the least of the Nations: nor for our obedience; for we are most rebellious and corrupt. The uniformity then and completion of that mighty change must be attributed to these ancient Seats of Learning, the standing Guardians of Truth, the glorious Luminaries of these Dominions. As the Lord by his own glorious voice ruleth the raging of the Sea, and noise of it's waves; so by the voice of these his delegated prophets, he set bounds to the madness of the people in that tumultuous change, saying, * hitherto shalt thou come and no farther: whilst in other Countries devoid of this barrier, Episcopacy was swept down in the torrent of a popular Reformation.

I all vicissitudes of Government, which have since happen'd in this Kingdom, great and terrible, These have born faithful witness to the Truth, unterrify'd with danger; unmov'd with the loss of their antient Patrimony. When in that Rebellion the people by unanimous subscriptions gave their voices against this Episcopal Church, and it stood wrongfully condemn'd by suborn'd and accumulative Treason; how did these Schools of the Prophets stand up together, as one man, in a zealous vindication, the Lord putting into their mouth a Spirit, not of an ignorant zeal, nor of contuma-

cy, but of Wisdom and Courage, * such as all their adversaries could not gain say nor resist. And by a magnanimous and concurrent resignation of these their abodes and possessions in defence of Episcopacy and Monarchy, have raised to themselves a Pillar of Glory, not to be defaced by the rust, nor shaken by

the vicissitudes of time; silencing for ever all foolish imputations of disloyalty to the Prince, or disaffection to the State, however dexterously infused into the ears of the people by the antient and senseless din of Popery.

And this our great complex Body being founded on the basis of Truth and of Verity, and resting under the outstretch'd wings and jealous eye of the Almighty, will (we trust) be found an overmatch for any single Assailant how great soever, or any party of men how combin'd soever, and will be enabled by her antient Learning to confound the network of their depraved politicks, and by her antient Discipline to laugh to scorn the emulous erections of domestick Academies, and superficial returns of foreign Education.

And not only we, who are nurtur'd in its bosom, but whoever else looks impartially on this Renown'd Body, situate in the midst of the Nation, resembling the Camp of the Levites, in the midst of the Camp of Israel, close round about the Tabernacle; under the prospect of this orderly and defensible disposition, may thus rejoice over her; * how goodly are thy Tents, and how excellent thy Tabernacles! blessed is he that blesteth thee, and curst is he that curseth thee. Amen.

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